

**Larry Hartig**  
Commissioner  
P.O. Box 111800  
Juneau, AK 99811-1800  
[www.dec.alaska.gov](http://www.dec.alaska.gov)

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

**Candice Bressler**  
Public Information Officer  
907.465.5009  
[candice.bressler@alaska.gov](mailto:candice.bressler@alaska.gov)

**Press Release** **COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

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**CONTACT:** Patryce McKinney, (907) 375-8206, [patryce.mckinney@alaska.gov](mailto:patryce.mckinney@alaska.gov)  
Steve Crupi, (907) 375-7799, [steve.crupi@alaska.gov](mailto:steve.crupi@alaska.gov)

### **State's Environmental Health Laboratory Receives International Accreditation**

(ANCHORAGE, AK) — The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announces the accreditation of the State of Alaska's Environmental Health Laboratory (EHL) to the ISO 17025 standard, an international standard for testing laboratories. Granted by the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation, ISO 17025 accreditation places the EHL quality assurance system and food testing on par with national Food and Drug Administration (FDA) laboratories. Without meeting these standards, Alaska would no longer be eligible for FDA funds to inspect food manufacturers. This achievement will also allow the State of Alaska to provide regulatory food testing in compliance with FDA requirements for a quicker response to food-borne illness outbreaks and allow closer collaboration with other accredited public health partners in state and federal agencies nationwide.

Located in Anchorage, Alaska, the EHL performs a range of microbiological and chemical testing services in support of government programs dedicated to protecting the health of Alaskans. By achieving this accreditation, the EHL has demonstrated the implementation of a rigorous quality assurance system, in addition to proving the ability to produce high quality and reliable scientific test results.

The EHL's ISO 17025 accreditation specifically encompasses a scope of work that includes food pathogen testing, in support of the goals of the Integrated Food Safety System (IFSS). IFSS is a national directive mandated by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) enacted in 2011. FSMA's implementation is designed to proactively help prevent foodborne illness, rather than react to outbreaks after they occur.

ISO 17025 accreditation satisfies a requirement for the Manufactured Food Regulatory Program Standards (MFRPS), which establishes a uniform basis for measuring and improving the performance of prevention, intervention, and response activities of manufactured food regulatory programs in the United States.

In addition to Alaska's robust seafood export industry whose importance to the state's economy is in the billions, there are over 200 individual small businesses in Alaska that depend on the state's inspection and permitting program in order to access out of state and wholesale markets.

For more information about the Environmental Health Lab, visit:  
<https://dec.alaska.gov/eh/lab/Index.htm>.

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